

SCHC 390 H01: Thesis Proseminar

South Carolina Honors College

Fall 2026

Version: August 21, 2026

GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

Credit Hours: 1 (pass/fail)

Instructor: Kara Jones

Email: kpjones@email.sc.edu OR kara.jones@grad.moore.sc.edu

Office Hours: Mondays 1 – 2 pm. If you need to meet at an alternative time or virtually, please email me to schedule.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This one-credit research course is designed to help students prepare for the SCHC senior thesis process and to take best advantage of the resources available at the University of South Carolina. Unlike the online, asynchronous version, this course meets in person once a week and provides students a more active and hands-on opportunity to deepen understanding of the content. Class sessions are reserved for discussion, collaborative exercises, and the workshopping of assignments for more immediate feedback from classmates and the instructor. Access to all course materials from the online, asynchronous version will also be available via Blackboard.

COURSE OBJECTIVES & LEARNING GOALS

Although each thesis project will vary by discipline, methodology, and scope, by the end of the semester students should have completed all course assignments, culminating in an 8-to-12-page thesis proposal (double-spaced) that follows guidelines outlined in this syllabus and on Blackboard.

In this course, we will work together to:

- Take your interest in a topic and narrow it to a manageable research question.
- Develop techniques for evaluating the existing literature on your topic.
- Produce a full-fledged research proposal for your honors thesis.
- Contact and secure a full-time faculty member who will work with you as your thesis director.

APPOINTMENTS AND COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR INSTRUCTOR

To communicate with me, please send me an email: kpjones@email.sc.edu. I will respond to student communications within two business days. If you do not receive a response within that timeframe, please follow up.

I strongly encourage students to schedule at least one one-on-one meeting with me during the semester. Sometimes, it is beneficial for students to meet multiple times to talk through the research process. I am happy to meet with you anytime we are mutually available. Please come to office hours or schedule meetings via email to arrange a meeting time outside of my regular office hours.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The class is collaborative in nature, so **attendance is required**. Life obviously gets in the way sometimes, so if you're unable to make it to class on a given day, please email me to inform me of your absence. You are allowed **one unexcused absence** without having your grade impacted. After that, half a letter grade (5 pts) will be deducted from your participation grade for each unexcused absence.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

This is a pass (S) /fail (U) 1-credit hour course. You must submit all assignments and score a minimum of 70 on each assignment and participation to pass the class. You will complete five written assignments, submit a thesis director contract, and engage in classwork (group work, a final presentation, etc.) that will count towards your participation score.

LATE WORK POLICY

All assignments are mandatory and have strict deadlines. Late submissions will receive partial credit and delayed feedback.

- **Up to one week late:** one letter grade (10 pts) deducted.
- **More than one week late:** up to two letter grades (20 pts) deducted. I will set and communicate a final deadline after which the assignment can no longer be accepted.

Extensions: Please email me **before** the due date to request an extension (the earlier the better). Extensions requested after the due date will still have a penalty.

GRADING SCHEMA

Graded Assignment	Percentage
Participation (includes attendance (5%) classwork, drafts (5%), and final presentation (5%))	15%
Assignment 1: Initial Research Question or Project Statement	15%
Assignment 2: Thesis Director Assignment	15%
Assignment 3: Annotated Bibliography	15%
Assignment 4: Informational Interview Assignment	15%
Assignment 5: The Thesis Proposal	25%
THESIS DIRECTOR CONTRACT	Failure to submit a Thesis Director Contract will not prevent you from passing the course. However, it may impact your thesis timeline. Securing a Thesis Director is a key priority for this course.

ASSIGNMENT GRADING SCALE

A: 90 +

B+: 87 – 89.4

B: 80 – 86

C+: 77 – 79.4

C: 70 – 76

D: 60 – 69.4

F: Below 60

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment descriptions are available on Blackboard. All assignments should be submitted to the appropriate portal as either an MS Word document or PDF.

- **ASSIGNMENT ONE:** Initial Research Question or Project Statement due **Friday, September 4 by midnight**
- **ASSIGNMENT TWO:** Thesis Director Assignment due **Friday, September 18 by midnight**
- **ASSIGNMENT THREE:** Annotated Bibliography due **Friday, October 9 by midnight**

- **ASSIGNMENT FOUR: Faculty Informational Interview Reflection & Thesis Director Contract due Friday, October 23 by midnight.**

Important note on the thesis director contract: If you still do not secure a thesis director by the end of the semester, this will not prevent you from passing the course. However, it may impact your thesis timeline. *Students who do not get a Thesis Director Contract approved by the end of SCHC 390 must either delay enrollment for the required SCHC 499 course or begin SCHC 499 with an interim thesis director (1 credit hour max).* For more information about how the director search impacts the thesis timeline, please schedule a meeting with me.

- **ASSIGNMENT FIVE: Thesis Proposal due Friday, November 13 by midnight.**

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

As a student of the university, you agree to comply with the University Honor Code, Carolina Creed, and all other policies of the University of South Carolina. Violations of any codes, creeds, rules, or policies are offenses that carry severe consequences. Students are expected to uphold the school's standard of conduct relating to academic honesty. Students assume full responsibility for the content and integrity of the academic work they submit. The guiding principle of academic integrity shall be that a student's submitted work, examinations, reports, and projects must be that of the student's own work.

Students shall be guilty of violating the honor code if they:

1. Represent the work of others as one's own.
2. Use or obtain unauthorized assistance in any academic work.
3. Give unauthorized assistance to other students.
4. Modify, without instructor approval, an examination, paper, record, or report for the purpose of obtaining additional credit.
5. Misrepresent the content of submitted work.
6. Observe any cheating activity and fail to report it to the instructor.

The penalty for violating the honor code is severe. Any student violating the honor code is subject to receive a failing grade for the course and will be reported to the Office of Student Affairs. If a student is unclear about whether a particular situation may constitute an honor code violation, the student should meet with the instructor to discuss the situation. All University of South Carolina rules and codes governing plagiarism are in effect for this course. Further information on the policies and procedures of the University of South Carolina can be found in the Carolina Community. Knowing the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable practices is sometimes tricky, and we'll discuss any questions you have in class. Plagiarism results in an automatic "U" for the course.

Please find the comprehensive **AI Policy** for this course on Blackboard.

ACADEMIC CONDUCT REGULATIONS

Infractions of academic discipline include, but are not limited to:

- **Cheating:** This refers to conduct during quizzes and examinations, which shall include using electronic, oral, or written information not specifically permitted by the instructor. It shall also include receiving or using electronic, oral, or written information from any person other than the instructor. It shall further include stealing, buying, selling, or using any copy of an examination before it has been administered.
- **Plagiarism:** This refers to submitting, as a student's own work, material obtained from another source without indicating the source from which it was obtained. It further includes letting another person compose or rewrite a student's assignment. A student who assists in the forms of dishonesty mentioned above shall be considered equally as guilty as the student who cheated or plagiarized.

CAROLINIAN CREED

The community of scholars at the University of South Carolina is dedicated to personal and academic excellence. Choosing to join the community obligates each member to a code of civilized behavior.

As a Carolinian...

- I will practice personal and academic integrity;
- I will respect the dignity of all persons;
- I will respect the rights and property of others
- I will discourage bigotry, while striving to learn from differences in people, ideas and opinions
- I will demonstrate concern for others, their feelings, and their need for conditions which support their work and development.
- Allegiance to these ideals requires each Carolinian to refrain from and discourage behaviors, which threaten the freedom and respect every individual deserves.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

If stress is impacting you or getting in the way of your ability to do your schoolwork, maintain relationships, eat, sleep, or enjoy yourself, please reach out to any of our mental health resources. Most of these services are offered at no cost as they are covered by the Student Health Services tuition fee. For all available mental health resources, check out **Student Health Services Mental Health** and the quick reference list below.

- Wellness Coaching can help you improve in areas related to emotional and physical wellbeing (e.g., sleep, resiliency, balanced eating and more) – schedule an appointment at (803) 777-6518 or on **MyHealthSpace**.
- Access virtual self-help modules via **Therapy Assistance Online (TAO)** – see **TAO registration instructions**.
- Access additional articles and videos on health and wellness topics on the Wellness Hub, **thriveatcarolina.com**, or by downloading the **CampusWell** app and searching for University of South Carolina.
- Counseling & Psychiatry offers individual and group counseling and psychiatric services – schedule an appointment at (803) 777-5223 or on **MyHealthSpace**.
- Access the 24-hr Mental Health Support Line at (833) 664-2854.
- Access an anonymous **mental health screening program**.

ACCOMMODATING DISABILITIES

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, contact the **Student Disability Resource Center**: 777-6142, TDD 777-6744, email **sadrc@mailbox.sc.edu**, or stop by Close-Hipp Suite 102. All accommodations must be approved through the Student Disability Resource Center.

The materials for this course are designed with accessibility in mind. Videos include captions and posted documents and course content are compatible with screen readers. If you encounter any accessibility challenges, please email me so we can address them promptly.

WRITING AND STUDENT SUCCESS RESOURCES

USC offers many resources to support your success throughout the semester.

- **University Libraries**: Research assistance, subject librarians, and citation support
- **Writing Center**: Feedback on writing at any stage of the writing process
- **Student Success Center**: Academic coaching, tutoring, and study support
- **Technology Support**: Blackboard and technology assistance
- **Student Disability Resource Center**: Disability accommodations and accessibility support
- **Mental Health Services**: Counseling and wellness resources

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Class Topic	Assignments and Tasks
8/24	Course Introduction	Work on: - Review syllabus and AI policy. - Mark your calendar for each assignment deadline. - Use Module 1 resources to explore topic ideas.
8/31	Honing a Topic and Narrowing your RQ or Project Idea (Module 1)	Fri, Sep 4 — Assignment 1: Initial Research Question/Project Idea Worksheet DUE Work on: Use Module 2 resources to identify potential directors. Consider reaching out to faculty/potential thesis directors for guidance on your initial topic ideas. No need to have a clear plan to start the convo!
9/7	LABOR DAY - NO CLASS	Work on: - Identifying potential directors for Assignment 2. - The sooner you schedule your Assignment 4 Informational Interview (due Oct 23), the better!
9/14	Securing a Thesis Director (Module 2)	Fri, Sep 18 — Assignment 2: Thesis Director Assignment DUE
9/21	Intro to Library Research — <i>Class will meet in Thomas Cooper Library, room L104.</i>	Work on: Scheduling the Assignment 4 Informational Interview (due Oct 23). Make contact (either via email or in person) with potential faculty mentors no later than ONE MONTH before Assignment 4 is due.
9/28	Writing the Annotated Bibliography (Module 3)	Work on: - Gathering and analyzing sources for the Annotated Bibliography (due Oct 9). - Consider completing a Zotero Online Tutorial. - Consider booking an appointment with a research librarian.
10/5	All About Methods (Module 4)	Fri, Oct 9 — Assignment 3: Annotated Bibliography DUE

10/12	Annotated Bib Work Week	Work on: • Complete Assignment 4 (due Oct 23). • Optional activity: work through the steps of the <u>Hopscotch Model</u> linked on BB (Module 4, "Research Methods Resources") to explore methods.
10/19	Writing the Thesis Proposal (Module 4)	Fri, Oct 23 — Assignment 4: Informational Interview & Director Contract DUE Work on: • Developing your Thesis Proposal (due Nov 13). • Read through Module 4 resources for developing a strong proposal—especially resources for thinking about the Methods section.
10/26	Writing a Thesis /Problem Statement (Module 4)	Work on: • Drafting your Thesis Proposal (draft due Nov 10, final due Nov 13).
11/2	Proposal + Independent Library Resource Exploration Work Week — <i>asynchronous</i>	Work on: • Finalizing your Thesis Proposal. • Consider making an appointment with the Writing Center to review your proposal.
11/9	Peer Review Proposal Drafts	Mon, Nov 9 (IN CLASS) — THESIS PROPOSAL DRAFT DUE. Fri, Nov 13 — Assignment 5: Thesis Proposal DUE
11/16	Proposal Presentations / Next Steps	Mon, Nov 16 (IN CLASS) — Thesis Presentation DUE
11/23	Thanksgiving Break (November 22-29)	
11/30	Proposal Presentations	Final deadlines for assignment resubmissions will be posted in Blackboard announcements.